REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks.

In the application, original claims 1-21 and 23-25 are pending, of which claims 1,12, 18, 24 and 25 are independent. The Office Action rejects all pending claims. Particularly, claims 1-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,682,525 to Bouve ("Bouve") in view of U.S. Patent No 6,202,023 to Hancock et al. ("Hancock"). Finally, claims 18-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being allegedly anticipated by Published U.S. Patent Application No. US 2002/0052674 to Chang ("Chang"). The Examiner also objected to claim 23 as being dependent upon a cancelled claim. Claim 23 has been amended to correct this error.

In response to the Office Action, Applicant amends claims 1 and 18. Applicant respectfully submits that, with the entry of these claim amendments, all of the pending claims are now in condition for allowance.

Examiner Pham is thanked for the courtesies extended to applicants' representative during the telephonic interview conducted November 3, 2003. The substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

Independent claim 1 as amended and claim 25 are directed to methods for searching an information retrieval system according to either a user's location or user-identified geographical location information provided in a table pre-configured by the user. Independent claim 12 recites a system including a geographic locations processor for receiving a user-defined

geographical location and a database index for generating a search query including the user-defined geographical location. Independent claim 18 as amended recites a method for performing a search on an information retrieval system for items of interest within a radial distance of a user's present location, "wherein the radial distance is determined such that a minimum number of search results will be identified by the search." Independent claim 24 as amended recites a method for performing a search, comprising steps of "configuring a table of names of geographical locations identified by a user," and searching the table for the named geographical location and corresponding location information.

Several of the dependent claims, such as claims 7-11, are further directed to steps for storing specified names of personalized landmarks in a database for subsequent searching. Put another way, the user configures a database with his own landmarks by identifying locations and providing his own names for them (e.g., "near Johnny's old school"). During operation, the user then speaks the landmark name and the system searches for the requested items of interest in the vicinity of the specified landmark.

The Bouve reference is primarily directed to a kiosk for enabling users to search for items of interest located in the vicinity of the kiosk. In a second embodiment, the information is stored in a central server that can be accessed remotely, enabling users to select among a plurality of remote locations (e.g., Los Angeles International Airport) to search different categories of requested items of interest. For searching around a user's present location, Bouve also discloses a system for detecting a mobile telephone user's positional coordinates. While Bouve discloses a system that enables a user to select from a short list of landmarks, these landmarks are not

identified by a user, and location information is not stored in a table that is pre-configured by the user.

During the interview of November 3, 2003, the Examiner stated that it was his position that user-defined table could be met by Bouve and Hancock in combination if the programmer became the user. In this manner, according to the Examiner, the user/programmer would have been the one who originally configured the table, and thus is using a table that is pre-configured by the user (originally done as programmer). In this art, pre-configured and user-defined are terms of art that preclude such an interpretation as the Examiner has put forth. It is well known that user-defined is intended to encompass situations whereby after implementation of software by a programmer, a user may input or alter information within the program. Although a programmer may become a user, the user and programmer have specific meanings and thus define separate roles. Anything that is user-defined should be able to be configured by the person in his role as a user. Simply because a programmer later uses his/her own software does not make something he/she set up as a programmer magically turn into a user-defined aspect. In order to be user-defined, the aspect of the program must be user-definable when the person is acting as a user. Accordingly, the Examiner's position cannot stand. Accordingly claim 12 and its dependent claims are allowable over the combination of Bouve and Hancock.

The Chang reference is directed to an information search system for a mobile communications device to retrieve information corresponding to a user's current location. The system additionally utilizes an "automatic positioning system" to track a user's mobile position and predict the future travel path. Like Bouve, the Chang reference does not disclose a system or

method that enables a user to pre-configure the database with user-defined locations. In addition,

Chang is silent regarding searching only within a radial distance. Bouve and Hancock are also

silent regarding limiting a search to within only a radial distance. During the aforementioned

interview, the Examiner was unable to point to any disclosure within Chang, Hancock, or Bouve

that suggests limiting the search area only to be within a radial distance. Claims 1 and 18

specifically require information to be limited only to within a radial distance. This provides at

least one advantage of limiting the search so as to provide, for example, the most efficient search

criteria and to provide, for example, only the most pertinent results.

On the other hand, Chang teaches searching along predefined paths or corridors or within

a grid (see Fig. 5). Chang is silent regarding limiting the search area to be only within a certain

radial distance. Accordingly, Chang fails to teach or suggest searching "only within a radial

distance of the geographical location identified by the user." Claim 18 and its associated

dependent claims are therefore allowable over Chang.

The Examiner points to Bouve col. 6, lines 38-52 as teaching the claimed search within a

radial distance. This portion cited by the examiner is wholly silent regarding searching within a

radial distance and certainly cannot be construed to teach searching only within a radial distance.

Hancock does not provide this deficiency. Claim 1 is therefore allowable over Bouve and

Hancock.

Also, as stated in the previous remarks submitted July 9, 2003 and restated here, Chang

does not teaches a user-definable table. The arguments regarding a user/programmer apply

equally to Chang is they do to Bouve and Hancock. Claims 24 and 25 are therefore allowable

over Chang.

In view of the foregoing all of the claims in this case are believed to be in condition for

allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions or determine that any further action is

desirable to place this application in even better condition for issue, the Examiner is encouraged

to telephone applicants' undersigned representative at the number listed below.

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